

however, anticipated this manoeuvre by a rapid march southward, and took up a fresh position on a ridge about 4 miles long, running north and south across the road 2 miles east of Driefontein. Lieutenant-General French followed up the enemy with the 1st Cavalry Brigade and the 6th Division, and came into contact with them at 11 A.M.

Meanwhile the 2nd Cavalry Brigade had reached Driefontein, and endeavoured, in conjunction with the 1st Cavalry Brigade, to turn the rear of the Boers by operating in the plain behind the ridge which they were holding. The enemy's guns, however, had a longer range than our field guns, which were the only ones immediately available, and some time elapsed before the former could be silenced, especially a Creusot gun, which had been placed in a commanding position on an isolated kopje,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of the northern end of the ridge. The Infantry of the 6th Division reached this end of the ridge about 2 P.M., having been under the enemy's shell fire, which did but little damage, for more than an hour. The Boers were gradually pushed back towards the centre of the ridge, where they made an obstinate stand.

The 9th Division came up at 5 P.M., and I at once ordered the Guards Brigade and the 19th Brigade to the assistance of the 6th Division; but before these reinforcements could reach the ridge, the enemy's position was stormed in the most gallant manner by the 1st Battalions of the Essex and Welsh Regiments, supported by the 2nd Battalion of the Buffs. The bodies of 102 Boers were afterwards found along the ridge, mainly in the position which they held to the last. Many of their horses were killed.

I regret to say that our casualties were heavy, aggregating 4 Officers (The Buffs—Captain Eustace. Welsh Regiment—Captain Lomax. Essex Regiment—Lieutenant F. N. Parsons, 2nd Lieutenant A. B. Coddington) killed, and 20 wounded, and 60 men killed, 314 wounded, and 16 missing. The Cavalry, Artillery, and Mounted Infantry suffered comparatively slight loss, 1 Officer (Mr. McCartie, a retired Indian civilian) being killed and 4 wounded, and 4 men killed, 25 wounded, and 2 missing.

A flagrant breach of the recognised usages of war was the cause of most of the casualties in the Infantry. The enemy held up their hands and hoisted a white flag in sign of surrender, but when our troops approached they were fired on at close quarters by a number of Boers posted under cover in rear of their front line and had to retire until reinforced, when the position was carried at the point of the bayonet. The holding up of their hands on the part of the Boers was observed by me and by several Officers of my Staff through telescopes, and it, as well as the persistent use by the enemy of flat-nosed expanding bullets, has been brought to the notice of the Presidents of the Orange Free State and South African Republic in a telegram, dated 11th March, a copy of which was forwarded for your Lordship's information, with a request that its contents might be communicated to the neutral Powers.

On the evening of the 10th the left and centre columns bivouacked together in the vicinity of Driefontein. On this date I directed Lieutenant-General Tucker to halt the 7th Division and 3rd Cavalry Brigade at Driekop, until he was joined by the second battalions of the Hampshire and Warwickshire Regiments.

These corps had been left behind, together with Lieutenant-Colonels De Lisle and Henry's battalions of Mounted Infantry, at Osfontein and Poplar Grove respectively, for the purpose of keeping open communication with Kimberley, until certain convoys which were being despatched from that place had arrived, and until the sick and wounded who were being sent back from Poplar Grove and Osfontein had crossed the Modder River.

I may here mention that the Russian and Dutch Military Attachés who had given themselves up on the 7th March at Poplar Grove were sent to Kimberley *en route* to Cape Town with this convoy of sick and wounded.

On the 11th March the combined left and centre columns marched to Aasvogel Kop, no opposition being met with. This day I ordered the 3rd Cavalry Brigade with two batteries of Horse Artillery to proceed from Driekop to Venter's Vlei. On 12th March my headquarters, together with the 6th and 9th Divisions, moved to Venter's Vlei, while the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades under Lieutenant-General French pushed on to Brand Dam Kop, 7 miles to the south-west of Bloemfontein. I diverted the Cavalry from Leeuwberg, which was their original objective, to a point much nearer Bloemfontein for two reasons:—

First, it was reported that reinforcements from the north were hourly expected at Bloemfontein, and it thus became imperatively necessary to forestall the enemy's movements. This report has subsequently been substantiated by a telegram from President Kruger to General Joubert, which has fallen into my hands.

Secondly, if any delay occurred, the Boers would have had time to remove the locomotives and rolling stock, which I understood to be still in the railway station at Bloemfontein.

Some slight resistance was met with by the Cavalry, but no serious fighting took place, and the only casualties that occurred were on the side of the Boers.

Early the next morning I proceeded to Brand Dam Kop, accompanied by the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, and found that the hills commanding the town had already been occupied by the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades. At noon several of the leading citizens of Bloemfontein, including Mr. Frazer, drove out to the kopje which I had just reached, about a mile from the town, and tendered its submission to the British Government. I entered Bloemfontein at 1 P.M., meeting with a cordial reception from the inhabitants, a number of whom accompanied the troops singing "God save the Queen," "Rule Britannia," &c. I established my headquarters in the official residence of the State President, which Mr. Steyn had vacated at 6 o'clock on the previous evening. The 1st Infantry Brigade marched this day from Venter's Vlei to Bloemfontein, and the 6th and 9th Divisions from the same place to Brand Dam Kop. On the morning of the 14th, the 6th Division advanced to Bloemfontein, being joined there in the course of the day by the 9th Division. As soon as the troops occupied the town I appointed Major-General G. T. Pretzman, C.B., to be Military Governor of Bloemfontein, granting him, subject to your Lordship's approval, the rank and pay of a Major-General on the Staff while so employed.

It may here be noted that under my orders the railway north and south of Bloemfontein was broken up for a sufficient distance on the evening of the 12th by Major Hunter-Weston, R.E., attached to the Cavalry Division, and this